

Fort Gordon, Ga

Green Matters

DPW Environmental and Natural Resources



SNOW POLLUTION

This past month the CSRA got a visit from the snow fairy. Even though it wasn't much, it was just enough to make snowballs, and make a mess. I don't know about you, but my kids were up at the crack of dawn anxious to throw themselves into the "angel dust". All that is left from that morning is a lonely snowball in my freezer. Now, they may be hoping to eat it at some point, but there is a few things to think about before you start making snow cones.



Snow can trap pollutants from the air within its meticulous crystal structures. You've heard the phrase, "don't eat yellow snow." This is true as some animal probably urinated on the snow, and you definitely don't want to be making snow comes with it. So it's easier to avoid something potentially bad if we can see possible toxins. Some physical signs that warn you of possible contamination of snow would be the color of it. As I mentioned earlier, avoid yellow snow. Snow that has a pink tint should be avoided. It is commonly referred to as "watermelon snow" because it tastes sweet. Microorganisms that live in the snow give it this pink hue, but if it is ingested it can give you diarrhea. Brown and black snow, obviously, avoid as well. It more than likely has mud or oils from vehicles in it. Definitely not what you want to be making snow cones out of.

Urban areas where pollution is higher could effect snow quality more. Exhaust from vehicles for example is absorb by snowflakes. Dr. Parisa Ariya, a professor of chemistry and atmospheric sciences at McGill University in Canada, led some research that showed how snow absorbs toxic pollutants put off by car exhaust. "Snow flakes are ice particles with various types of surfaces, including several active sites, that can absorb various gaseous or particulate pollutants." They tested this theory by placing snow and exhaust fumes in a chamber. They observed after the chemical reactions took place that snow was efficient at removing toxic particles from the air. After an hour, they observed compounds in the snow that could be a health hazard. Catching a few flakes on your tongue is not that big of a deal, but I would think twice before making snow cones especially if you live in urban areas.

Here is an interesting fact about snow that you might not know. Well, the texture of snow not only allows for the absorption of toxins, but it also allows for the absorption of sound. Have you ever noticed how quiet and peaceful it is right after it snows? It's amazing how calm everything seems. The open spaces in snowflakes make it great for absorbing sound. Just like flat walls echo sounds and amplify it, snow is like nature's "carpet" that absorbs sound. Unfortunately, it may not last long once trampled upon and compacted as the spaces are no longer there.

If we are fortunate enough to see some more snow this winter have fun in it...just don't eat it. Always err on the side of caution.

Happy Valentine's Day!



Upcoming Training:

- Feb. 10-11 Hazardous Materials/Waste Management course, 0800-1600, Bldg 11307
- Feb. 18 Stormwater Industrial Training, 0900-1100, Bldg 11307
- Mar. 2 2nd QTR FY16 EQCC Meeting, 1300-1400, Darling Hall, G Conf Rm

Register for training at:

<http://gordon.army.mil/index.php/environmental-division/training>

Training schedule available at Gordon.army.mil

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The Environmental office has many functions. Different programs and acronyms can become confusing if you are not familiar with the day to day operations here. So here is Environmental "in a nutshell".

Environmental "In a Nutshell"



Clean Air Act (CAA)- Don't let it get into the air!

Clean Water Act (CWA) - Don't let it get into the water!

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - Know the impact before you do it!

Emergency Planning & Community Right-to-Know (EPCRA) - Let them know what you've got!

Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) - If it's bad don't make it. If it's bad and you have it, get rid of it properly!

Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) - If you generate it, it's yours forever!

Pollution Prevention Act (P2) - Prevent Pollution!

Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA) - If you make a mess, clean it up!

Federal Facility Compliance Act (FFCA) - Can land a star behind bars.

Allows EPA to evaluate the compliance status of federal facilities and all operation (tenants, contractor) that support government.

Sustainability & Environmental Management System (SEMS) - Plan-Do-Check-Act!

Integrates environmental stewardship into the overall management of an installation and provides a structure for achieving the goals established by the installations' Environmental Policy (GC Policy #69).

K-Cups..a Mounding Problem.



I don't know about you, but on these cold mornings I look forward to my coffee. Just the smell of it brewing puts me in a good mood, but what doesn't put me in a good mood is the amount of "trash" that results from all this brewing. Like myself and others, I own a plain ole simple coffee maker. I have a reusable filter that I fill every morning with my black gold, and I then I add my 2 cups of water, and the magic begins. That doesn't seem so hard to do, dump and pour. In the words of John Sylvan, the inventor of the K-Cup, "...it's not like drip coffee is tough to make."



What's my point already? Well, if you are not familiar with the K-Cup let me enlighten you. These are single-serving brewing pods that are made for the Keurig K-Cup coffee machines. They have transformed here recently the way that we brew coffee. About one in three American dwellings now has one of these spiffy, and slightly expensive, coffee machines. Sylvan's vision for the machine was mainly for offices and business use. He never thought that it would become popular for personal home use. In 2014 most of \$4.7 billion in revenue generated for Keurig Green Mountain came from the sale of the K-Cups. So, what's up with the K-Cup? The pods are NOT recyclable OR biodegradable! That's a big brewing problem for the environment. In 2010, Eric Anderson, a professor of marketing at Northwestern University, noted that they "generate a ton of plastic waste." Sylvan sometimes regrets that he ever made it.

Here is a visual to show you just how big of a problem these K-cups are....in 2014, enough K-Cups were sold that if they were lined up end to end, they would circle the earth 10.5 times! Moniqu Oxender, the Chief Sustainability officer for Keurig is not happy with this problem either and recognizes that something must be done. Keurig Green Mountain since has pledged by 2020 to create a fully recyclable pod. Sylvan is doubtful that it can be done due to the layered, unique plastic that it is made of. If you already own a Keurig coffee machine you can opt to use the reusable filter for K-Cups instead of the non recyclable pods to help reverse this mounding problem.



The future of the K-Cup is yet to be seen. As a consumer, it makes you think about the products that we purchase and their impact on the environment. Sylvan started a new company selling solar panels in hopes to right a wrong that he feels he contributed to with the invention of the K-Cup.

Unique ways to reuse K-Cups

1. Use them to start seedlings for your garden.
2. Use to store and organize sewing supplies or hair accessories on a spice rack.
3. They are also great for numerous crafts. For more info visit <http://www.buzzfeed.com/jessicaprobus/o-k-cups#.jibj2IQPv>





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Sources:

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http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/snow-polluted_us_569d33e2e4b0778f46fa4aa1

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/559220-is-eating-snow-safe/>

Environmental "in a Nutshell" source Unknown

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The Natural Resources Branch has stocked Whittimore and Wilkerson ponds with Rainbow trout. Whittimore will be open to all fishermen with a Fort Gordon fishing license starting **Saturday, February 6**. Wilkerson will be open for **family (with children) fishing only** on **February 6**, and then open to all fishermen starting **February 7**. Fishing hours for Whittimore and Wilkerson ponds will be **0630 until 1900 each day** until further notice. The creel limit for trout will be **8 per day**.

Whittimore and Wilkerson will remain open for fishing until all of the trout are harvested. No additional licenses are required other than your normal Fort Gordon fishing license. Any bait and tackle legal for use for other types of fishing on Fort Gordon are also legal for use to catch trout. Any additional questions may be answered by calling (706) 726-0098 or (706) 791-2397.

